

## Emergency Message for U.S. Citizens: Authorized Departure for U.S. Embassy Employees

October 4, 2016

The State Department warns U.S. citizens of the approach of Hurricane Matthew and recommends U.S. citizens avoid all travel OR avoid non-essential travel to the Bahamas and The Turks and Caicos Islands. The National Hurricane Center (NHC; [www.nhc.noaa.gov](http://www.nhc.noaa.gov)) reports that Hurricane Matthew is headed for The Bahamas and a hurricane warning has been issued. . Hurricane Matthew is a strong, dangerous storm and storm conditions in terms of wind are expected to reach the area by October 5. U.S. citizens residing and traveling in coastal areas in this region should be alert to flooding.

Given the approaching hurricane, there is limited time available for a safe departure as the airport in Nassau will close on October 5. The Department of State has authorized non-emergency personnel and family members of U.S. government employees to depart The Bahamas in advance of Hurricane Matthew. We recommend U.S. citizens depart The Bahamas and Turks and Caicos Islands if possible and work with commercial air carriers to leave prior to the arrival of the hurricane. Airports will close once conditions deteriorate and safe travel is not possible. We recommend those citizens who are unable to depart to shelter in place in a secure location.

Travelers should apprise family and friends in the United States of their whereabouts, and keep in close contact with their tour operator, hotel staff, and local officials for evacuation instructions. Travelers should also protect their travel and identity documents against loss or damage, as the need to replace lost documentation could hamper or delay return to the United States.

For further information:

- See the [State Department's travel website](http://travel.state.gov) – <http://travel.state.gov> for the [Worldwide Caution](#), Travel Warnings, Travel Alerts, and [Bahamas Specific Information](#) at:  
<https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/the-bahamas.html>

- Enroll in the [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](https://step.state.gov/step) <https://step.state.gov/step> to receive security messages and make it easier to locate you in an emergency.
- Contact the U.S. Embassy in The Bahamas, located at 42 Queen Street (across from the British Colonial Hilton Hotel), Nassau; telephone: 242-322-1181; after hours emergency telephone: 242-357-7004; ACS unit fax: 242-356-7174; e-mail: [ACSNASSAU@state.gov](mailto:ACSNASSAU@state.gov) ; web page: <http://nassau.usembassy.gov>. The Turks & Caicos Consular Agency is located at 2 Venture Ct., Grace Bay Suite 102E, Providenciales, Turks and Caicos. The Consular Agent is LeShelle Tull-Thomas (649-232-5713, [TullThomasLS@state.gov](mailto:TullThomasLS@state.gov)).
- Call 1-888-407-4747 toll-free in the United States and Canada or 1-202-501-4444 from other countries from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays).
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